

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJ: PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER'S MAY 31 PRESS CONFERENCE AT
NATO HEADQUARTERS

BEGIN SUMMARY: PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES HELD TWO-HOUR PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 31 AT NATO HEADQUARTERS IN WHICH HE STRESSED HIS COUNTRY'S DETERMINATION TO FULFILL NATO COMMITMENTS AND SAID PORTUGAL WAS NOT A "TROJAN HORSE" IN THE ALLIANCE. HE THOUGHT PRESIDENT FORD HAD UNDERSTOOD "SINCERITY" OF PORTUGUESE VIEWPOINT. GONCALVES SPOKE AT LENGTH OF NEED FOR OTHER COUNTRIES TO APPRECIATE HISTORICAL PARTICULARITIES OF PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION. END SUMMARY.

1. PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES, FLANKED BY ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO AND PORTUGUESE NATO PERMREP DE FREITAS CRUZ, HELD A WELL-ATTENDED TWO-HOUR PRESS CONFERENCE AT NATO HEADQUARTERS LATE AFTERNOON, MAY 31. IN INTRODUCING PRIME MINISTER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PORTUGUESE PERMREP SAID PRESS CONFERENCE WOULD LAST ONLY 45 MINUTES BECAUSE OF GONCALVES' HEAVY SCHEDULE. SOMEWHAT RESERVED AT FIRST, GONCALVES LATER WARMED TO HIS AUDIENCE AND ANSWERED QUESTIONS AT GREAT LENGTH, ONLY OCCASIONALLY CON-

FERRING WITH ROSA COUTINHO AND GIVING THE IMPRESSION OF A MAN SURE OF WHAT HE WANTED TO SAY AND DETERMINED TO GET HIS MESSAGE ACROSS. HE EASILY FIELDDED SEVERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PORTUGUESE "REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS".

2. FOLLOWING COMMENTS BY GONCALVES WERE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST:

A. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ABOUT PRESIDENT FORD'S CONCERN OVER COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN PORTUGAL, GONCALVES SAID THE AFM AND PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT ARE NOT COMMUNIST-DOMINATED. HE WENT ON TO STRESS THAT PORTUGAL IS NOT A "TROJAN HORSE" IN NATO. GONCALVES ALSO SAID THE U.S. WAS NOT THE ONLY COUNTRY THAT HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN PORTUGAL. ASKED SPECIFICALLY ABOUT HIS TALK WITH PRESIDENT FORD, GONCALVES SAID HE THOUGHT THE PRESIDENT HAD UNDERSTOOD THE "SINCERITY" WITH WHICH HE HAD EXPLAINED PORTUGAL'S POLICIES.

B. GONCALVES WAS ASKED WHETHER PORTUGAL ACCEPTED THE REFERENCE IN THE NATO COMMUNIQUE TO THE GROWTH OF WARSAW PACT ARMED FORCES BEYOND APPARENT DEFENSIVE NEEDS AND IF SO, WHETHER THIS WOULD HAVE A CHILLING EFFECT ON RELATIONS WITH THE USSR. HE REPLIED HIS GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY FOR SIGNING THE COMMUNIQUE AND ACCEPTS AS CORRECT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY NATO AUTHORITIES ON WHICH COMMUNIQUE IS BASED. IN ANSWER TO A LATER QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER PORTUGAL WOULD COME TO THE AID OF A NATO COUNTRY WHICH WAS THE VICTIM OF OUTSIDE AGGRESSION, GONCALVES SAID HIS COUNTRY WOULD FULFILL ITS NATO OBLIGATIONS. ASKED WHETHER THERE WERE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON PORTUGAL IN NATO ORGANS, GONCALVES REPLIED NO.

C. ANSWERING A QUESTION ABOUT THE CLOSING OF THE NEWSPAPER REPUBLICA, GONCALVES SAID IT INVOLVED A LABOR-MANAGEMENT DISPUTE, AND THERE WAS NO CENSORSHIP IN PORTUGAL. OTHER PORTUGUESE NEWSPAPERS CRITICIZE THE AFM, WHICH IS NOT AFRAID OF SUCH CRITICISM.

D. ASKED WHETHER HE HAD ADVISED ANY OF HIS NATO COUNTERPARTS TO PAY LESS ATTENTION TO SOARES, GONCALVES ANSWERED INDIRECTLY BY SAYING HE HOPED FOR MORE DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND AFM SO THAT THE FORMER COULD BETTER UNDERSTAND PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS.

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3. NO TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE IS AVAILABLE AT PRESENT AND FOREGOING IS BASED ON MISSION OFFICERS' NOTES. BRUCE

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